



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Montré D. Freeman, City Manager
J. Phillip Webster, Interim Chief of Police

Date: April 6, 2023

Subject: Consideration – Authorize Application for FY2023-2024 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Implementation Projects Grant

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Office of Community Oriented Police Services (COPS Office) announced the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Implementation Projects Grant for FY2023-2024 in March 2023 and will be accepting grant applications through April 21, 2023. Grant funding for this particular grant is for the promotion of the mental health and wellness of law enforcement officers throughout the nation, with emphasis on implementing new programs within agencies to better address the needs of officers and the daily challenges they face while serving in their chosen profession. This funding opportunity would help the Elizabeth City Police Department implement its own Mental Health and Wellness Program that would be of significant benefit to our sworn law enforcement personnel. This grant has no matching funding requirement and would therefore have no budgetary impact on the City. If awarded, the grant would become active in October 2023; it is a 24-month grant award. The Department is seeking approval to submit a preliminary grant application for the COPS Office Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Grant for this funding so that the opportunity to receive grant monies is not missed.

ANALYSIS:

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Implementation Projects Grant for FY2023-2024 funds have been allotted to local law enforcement agencies nationwide for the purpose of improving the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement officers through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs. The Elizabeth City Police Department is seeking permission to submit a preliminary grant application in the amount of \$35,000.00,

which will include stress reduction training/mental health awareness and initiative seminars/training sessions offered on a quarterly basis; psychological screenings for all sworn officers; peer-to-peer training to include lodging/travel expenses; and books, hand-out materials/flyers, and wellness bags – all of which will be utilized in the implementation of a departmental wellness program. The preliminary budget would be as follows:

- 1) Stress Reduction/Mental Health Awareness Initiative Seminars/Training Sessions ~ 8 during a two-year period @ \$1,625.00 per session for a total of \$13,000.00;
 - 2) Psychological Screenings for all Sworn Members @ approximately \$200.00 per screening for a total of \$13,200.00;
 - 3) Peer-to-Peer for two ECPD Members in partnership with the North Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program (NCLEAP) for a total of \$5,000.00 which includes lodging/travel; and
 - 4) Incidental Supplies to include Books, Hand-Out/Flyers, and Wellness Bags Hand-out/Flyers/Wellness Bags for a total of \$3,800.00.
- TOTAL GRANT BUDGET = \$35,000.00

As previously stated, if approved to submit an application and the grant is awarded, the above items would be used towards the implementation of the Department's own mental health and wellness program for our sworn members. Good mental and psychological health is just as essential as good physical health for law enforcement officers to be effective in keeping our communities safe from crime and violence. The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) program supports efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers and deputies. Unfortunately, the stress of officers' work and the stigma often associated with seeking assistance for emotional and mental health issues have led to negative consequences such as divorce, alcoholism, injury, and even an increase in suicides for officers across the country.

Staff believes in the promotion of mental health and wellness for our members and feels this grant is a great opportunity to provide greater assistance and resources to our officers. This would not only be an enhancement to existing members, but could also serve as a recruitment tool/incentive in meeting present and future staffing needs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, approve the submission of a preliminary grant application for the COPS Office Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Implementation Projects Grant in the amount of \$35,000.00 to fund stress reduction seminars, screenings, peer-to-peer training of members and materials – all of which will be used towards the implementation of a departmental wellness program for ECPD Officers.